

The Principles of Christian Loyalty.

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SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

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OXFORD,

At St. MARY's,

On Monday, Jan. 31. 1742-3.

Being the Anniversary of the *Martyr-*
dom of K. CHARLES I.

By JOHN BURTON B.D. Fell. of *Eton* College,
late Fell. of C.C.C. *Oxford*.

OXFORD,

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TO THE
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THE following discourse having been honoured with the approbation of persons, for whose integrity I have a just esteem, is now presented to the Publick in pursuance of the same design, with which it was preached, namely, to inculcate the principles of Christian Loyalty; the influence whereof it were to be wished might be as universal, as the publick good is interested in their effects. Their application was never more seasonable than in the present Times. It has been observ'd that Ages, as well as Persons, stand distinguish'd by their peculiar characters: now that of the present age will upon comparison be found quite different from the foregoing one: Instead of Hypocrisy and Dissimulation, I fear, our times will be distinguish'd by the character of undissembled Irreligion and Licentiousness, an impatience of all restraint both human and divine. These circumstances call for the application of Christian doctrines for the support of Civil Government. Accordingly it has been shewn, that the Loyalty of a Christian Subject must be built upon the Fear of God or Religion; and that it cannot stand sure upon any other foundation. And however Persons and Things may be misrepresented, yet thus much we may in general assert, that those

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those Subjects give proof of the truest affection to his Majesty, who by example and precept promote the influence of those principles, upon which the security of his Government depends. To obey the King and all in authority under him for conscience-sake, discountenancing sedition in all shapes, and faithfully discharging the several duties of our stations --- this is a plain and sufficient System of a Christian man's Politicks; this is what I learnt, and practis'd in the University, and I hope that herein I have exercis'd myself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards Man. --- And what is more than this, I fear, cometh of Evil.

Modern Politicians may perhaps laugh at this old fashion'd primitive Scheme of uncourtly Politicks. --- For my part, I shall only say, that it is the Christian scheme, founded upon Gospel-Principles, and in the best manner calculated for the interests of Civil Government. On the other hand, Men unexperienc'd in the world and reasoning abstractedly from the nature of things cannot but observe many proceedings, which startle their apprehension and seem not easily to be accounted for upon the foot of good Policy. They wou'd be apt to demand, wherein consists that wondrous merit of Party-zeal, which engrosses the rewards of publick virtue --- where is that disinterestedness and self-denial, the best proof of the sincerity of our professions --- where is that independency and freedom of action, which is the preservative of our integrity --- and be surpris'd to find, that men given to change

change, *professedly acting upon variable principles, shou'd be esteem'd the most steady friends to any Government --- or friends to their Country, who resolve all publick good into self-interest --- or, that they shou'd be esteem'd the most dutifull Subjects, who appear seditious even in the expression of their Loyalty.* And with regard to the instances of this applauded zeal, I fear, they will often be found no other than so many acts of flattery, or injustice and uncharitableness; of flattery to the higher Powers, by paying an implicit servile compliance to any unreasonable commands, and the impos'd tribute of mercenary praises on persons and administrations; of injustice and uncharitableness to their innocent Brethren, whose character they wantonly injure by bringing a railing accusation against them, by fixing on them the imputation of principles and practices, which they disavow, and that load of indeterminate guilt, which attends an unpopular opprobrious denomination. --- If these are the ordinary effects of party-zeal, I hope, I may without offence express my abhorrence of principles inconsistent with the notion of Christian charity, common justice and the publick Good. For my part, I have endeavour'd to establish the principle of true disinterested Loyalty on the foot of Christianity: The general obligation to obedience I have drawn from the Gospel, and the particular measures of it from the Laws of the Land: What has been offer'd will, I hope, be understood, as it is intended, as one of the most proper instances of affection to his Majesty and the Government, which a Preacher on this occasion can express.

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With regard to that branch of my discourse, which respects the particular occasion of the Anniversary Solemnity, I think, I need not offer any apology. It may perhaps be thought unfashionable or perhaps unpopular, but surely it never can be thought criminal or offensive to do this publick honour to the Character of the Royal Martyr, while the practice stands authoriz'd by an Act of Parliament and the publick Liturgy of our Church. But shou'd it happen otherwise, it wou'd be a sad proof of a supposition more injurious to the Common Weal than any I have suggested, viz. that the caprices and prejudices of private persons overbear the Laws of the Land and the rules of common decency; and, if this is the case, I fear, we have little reason to boast of our excellent Constitution. But while publick authority is on our side, and the Monarchical form of Government subsists, methinks we shou'd be wanting to ourselves and to that duty, which we owe his present Majesty, if we did not endeavour to answer the good intention of the Legislature in the institution of this Solemnity. Besides, there are some Local reasons, which in a more special manner enforce the common obligation. To vindicate the character of a Prince, not less good than unfortunate, is a debt of common justice, but we of this place stand further engag'd in point of gratitude to our Royal Benefactor to commemorate those Christian Virtues, in the benefits of which we are so much interested. His name will ever be had in honour in this University, which retains so many monuments of his piety and munificence, together with the memory of his most instructive example.

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I am aware, that in the prosecution of my subject I have been led into reflexions on some nice points, which wise men generally speak of with much caution, and in which honest men are apt to express their good Will in such a manner, as sometimes to have their prudence called in question. For my part, as I have never been forward to meddle with matters, which do not fall in the way of a Clergyman or a Scholar, so when any Call administers special occasion, and in cases especially, where the publick interest is concern'd, I am not accusom'd to dissemble my sentiment, but speak out with an ingenuous freedom, which cannot, I conceive, give offence to the friends of our Constitution in Church and State.

'Tis indeed with some satisfaction I look back upon our University, in which I spent many years in a laborious and honourable station: I now enjoy the reflexion, that my endeavours in the publick service have not been altogether in vain: and I shall ever think myself interested in her welfare. May Learning and Religion, the parent of true Loyalty, and whatsoever is commendable and of good report for ever flourish and abound? Thus I pray for the peace of our Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love her: for my Brethren and Companion's sake I will wish her prosperity: yea because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek to do her good!

C.C.C. Oxford,
Mar. 15.

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PROV. XXIV. 21.

My son, fear thou the Lord, and the King: and meddle not with them, that are given to Change.

THIS Lesson of Political Wisdom demands our special regard, as it is deliver'd by the most able Politician, the wisest among the Sons of Men. And We Christians may further observe, that a greater than Solomon has confirm'd its Authority.

It sets forth the duty of a Religious Man, and a Loyal Subject: Religion and Loyalty go hand in hand: the former is the foundation of the latter: they are comprehended in the same precept: their connection is inseparable; *My Son, fear thou God, and the King.* He that feareth God, will also, in obedience to the divine command, fear the King: the good Christian cannot but be a good Subject.

And, in consequence of this general duty, there follows a caution against all contrary measures, against every tendency towards sedition, against joining in confederacies of friendship and counsels with them, that are given to change; men of intriguing, factious, turbulent spirits; men forward to project Schemes of innovation in the establish'd government, and to give disturbance to its orderly administrations. *Meddle not with men thus given to change.*

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So that the Doctrine of my Text may be consider'd as containing a compendious System of a Christian Man's Politicks, such as is not of a too refin'd and complicated nature, but plain, and simple; easy to be understood, and practic'd; best suited to answer the ends of Government, and promote the happiness of Society. A Doctrine indeed of general use and importance, but more especially seasonable and necessary in these licentious times, in which (notwithstanding the many noisy pretensions to zeal for the present Government) we have reason to apprehend that the true spirit of Loyalty is decay'd, in proportion as the only solid grounds, on which it subsists, are weakned; in proportion as the influence of Religious principles on men's minds is lost or impair'd!

I. I shall endeavour to state the *notion*, and the *extent* of the two duties enjoin'd in the positive part of the Precept. *My Son, fear thou the Lord, and the King.*

II. I shall consider the nature of the prohibition or caution given in the latter clause of my text, *Meddle not with them, that are given to change*; and shall point out some of the more remarkable cases contain'd under it; and subjoin some arguments shewing the folly, danger, and wickedness of the practices forbidden. — And as I pass on, I shall occasionally make application of the matters occurring to the present Solemnity.

First then, We may observe that in Scripture language the *Fear of God* is commonly us'd as a general character, denoting the Sum and Substance of Religion; from whence we may collect the extensive influence of this principle, which is thus suppos'd to include all duties towards God.

Fear

Fear in general is an unquiet, busy Passion, springing from the root of Self-preservation, implanted in us by the Author of our nature, as a watchful Monitor and Outguard against the approach of all evil, Natural or Moral.

But the Fear of God is a principle of superior force, proportionable to the superiority of its object; of uniform, uninterrupted efficacy, diffusing itself thro' every branch of moral conduct, sufficient to counterbalance the weight of every temptation, and over-rule every motive to disobedience. It is a reverential affection of mind resulting from the consideration of the divine Attributes, an awful apprehension of some infinitely great, omnipresent, tremendous Power. When distant consequences are brought home into a point of nearer view, when every action is represented as passing under the immediate inspection of an almighty Judge; and Punishment hangs close upon the rear of Guilt, — in these circumstances the mind cannot but be struck with a kind of serious horror: the sense of danger excites circumspection; the faculties take the alarm, and stand prepar'd for duty; the Passions obey the restraint of Reason; a conformity of action follows the operation of the Religious sentiment; and in the end obedience to the Divine Will comes enforc'd by motives of Self-preservation.

But further -- while we consider the insufficiency of all merely human provisions, the unavoidable defects of all human Laws, whether directive or coercive; the want of competent Knowledge to foresee all cases, and prescribe proper rules; the want of competent Power to prevent and restrain Evil, and enforce Obedience, -- in this view of things we perceive the necessity, as well as efficacy of Religious principles.

ples. The Fear of God must be taken in to give an authoritative Sanction to human Laws; where other arguments cannot prevail, *the Terrors of the Lord* will persuade men into obedience. This is the supreme moral Principle, universal in its extent, and unlimited in its operation: it is *the beginning of wisdom*, the foundation and preservation of all virtues; inspiring the mind with patience to suffer, and with courage to overcome the greatest difficulties. *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* — 'Twas *this* reflection which supported a good man amidst circumstances of the nicest distress: The Fear of God over-ruled the violence of the temptation, and preserved his integrity.

Examples of Fortitude, both Active and Passive, under the influence of this principle make the brightest figure in history. But among all of this kind, especially in the latter respect, I know not any more illustrious than that which we this day commemorate, the Example of the Royal Martyr. The Portraiture of Majesty in distress, aw'd only by the fear of God and supported by his grace, rais'd above itself, above the world, with a generous contempt of all temporal evils, exercis'd by the most severe trials, perfected through sufferings, and by Charity and Patience more than conquerour — the Portraiture of Majesty in these circumstances presents to a Christian's eye the most noble idea of Magnanimity, and true greatness, far more glorious than all the envied honours of the most prosperous fortune, than all the pomp and grandeur of Royalty, than all the celebrated triumphs of the most victorious, fortunate Princes. We here behold the triumphs of a Christian Hero; triumphs, as great in kind, as were the afflictions which he endur'd and overcame; and as many in number, as were the injuries of his persecutors, which he most graciously pardon'd, herein exercising to the

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very last that glorious branch of a Christian King's prerogative, the only one, of which the malice of his enemies could not dispossess him. The *fear of God*, which is the *beginning of true wisdom*, appears to have been the governing principle throughout his whole behaviour: the influence of this preserv'd his constancy amidst variety of temptations, amidst trials, perhaps the more difficult and dangerous, trials in his prosperity. Not to abuse the advantages of the highest fortune, and the superiority of station, which is apt to set men above the reach of ordinary restraints, is an instance of Fortitude and Self-denial, not commonly found in the personal character of Princes: And the praise of a constant sincere Piety is still more uncommon. But these and other virtues requisite to form the Moral man and the Christian in a most exemplary manner adorn'd his character. He had a true sense of the best reform'd Religion, and was a member of the *Church of England*, not upon prejudice, but the most rational conviction. He was too good a Christian to be inclin'd to *Popery*; his whole life carried along with it a continual confutation of this calumny, which was properly retorted on the objectors, who, in rebelling against their Prince acted against *Protestant* principles; and in the end promoted the interest of that Church, which subsists upon the corruptions of Christianity, and the destruction of our Establishments. To how good purpose He studied, understood, and practic'd the principles of the best constituted Church, he has given sufficient evidence both by his Example and Writings: he defend'd them by Arguments as a Divine, by his Authority as a Prince, and by his Death as a Martyr. 'Twas his Ambition to make the effects of his Piety as extensive as those of his Government; and if his Subjects had proportion'd the measure of their obedience to Him, by that of His obedience to the Laws of God, no Sovereign cou'd have rul'd with a more unlimited, unenvied power.

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With regard to his Religious and private Moral character, no person of the age appears more unexceptionable and blameless. In this he has been spar'd by the men, whose mercies were cruel: the few or vain attempts of his enemies to disparage his reputation are so many proofs in his favour. And surely no Apology need now to be made for giving him his deserved praise in this respect. 'Tis a debt of Justice due to his memory; yea, it seems to be a duty contain'd in the Church-Service for this occasion, wherein, while we deprecate the effects of National guilt, we at the same time commemorate His virtues. And I hope that act will never be thought offensive which is authoriz'd by publick Wisdom.

With regard to his Political conduct, the attempt to justify or excuse all proceedings would be as wrong, as to censure and condemn all in the gross: both are the effects of prejudice. And no man, who has a just sense of Legal Liberty wou'd commend or vindicate actions, which he shou'd be sorry to see imitated. That there were irregularities and unwarrantable measures in the course of publick administrations, which gave occasion to popular jealousies and discontents, cannot be dissembled; and is as notorious, as that all the grievances complain'd of were amply redress'd, beyond the expectation of many, and in general, to the satisfaction of all reasonable subjects. And even these, (if the actions of Kings are entitl'd to those charitable constructions, which are usually admitted in the cases of private Persons) were attended with many plausible circumstances, which might be fairly pleaded in their excuse, and in abatement of rigorous censures. But however this be, I think we may venture to lay down this general assertion, that Where the subjects have

the strongest assurance of the virtuous and Religious character of their Prince, they there have withal the strongest moral assurance, that the Royal Power will not wilfully be abused to the ruin of the people. A good Christian King will never become a Tyrant: He that ruleth in the fear of God, will never deliberately be injurious to his subjects, while he remembers, that he also *hath a Master in Heaven*; but, as he makes God's Will the Rule, he will make the Good of his people the End of his Government. And therefore the Rebellion of Subjects against such a Prince, whose personal virtues they could not but esteem, and in whose sincerity they might safely have confided (even tho' he had never disarm'd himself of every offensive branch of power) must appear more unwarrantable and inexcusable. And by the event it appear'd, amidst the various affected forms of Godliness, how little in reality they feared God, who stretched out their hands against the Lord's anointed; and, in a profane mockery of Religion, at the same time pretended a noble zeal for the honour of God, while they went on presumptuously in an open disobedience to his commands.

'Tis certainly a circumstance very desireable on account of publick good, that Princes shou'd act under the habitual influence of Religious principles. And from the plain reason of things we might conclude, that in every Christian country, and more especially in these realms, in which the King is stil'd *Supreme Governour of the Church, and Defender of the Faith*, Piety in the Regal character shou'd be esteem'd the brightest ornament of the Crown; and Princes ruling in the fear of God should be counted worthy of double honour. Their truly Christian virtues stand entitled to a singular esteem and veneration in a Christian man's eye; and, as they in general carry with them a proof of a good heart, they plead a peculiar merit

merit in their favour, sufficient to atone for many errors in judgment, and mismanagements in point of policy. To this we may add, that friends to Monarchy would of course be inclin'd to shew some reverence for the person of the Monarch, and a tender regard for his reputation; and all good subjects would consider the extent of their Allegiance, and not through an intemperate zeal for Liberty, appear industrious to justify or excuse Rebellion. -- All this might reasonably be expected in the present case. But, I know not how it happens, this Pious King has not met with that favourable treatment which his virtues deserv'd: his actions have been partially represented and uncharitably censur'd; as tho' the merits of a cause ought to be determin'd by the event, or the measures of right and wrong adjusted by the standard of every one's particular scheme of Politicks. It seems *the Children of this World*, in forming the character of a Prince, seldom have regard to Religion or the fear of God; this, as being thought a matter of no immediate importance, does not often come into consideration; and accordingly, the Prince is consider'd merely under the character of a Politician, as pursuing such a particular scheme of Secular interest, without any respect to the lawfulness of the means: In this view, wicked, successful Cunning, and the plausible arts of Corruption may be reckon'd among Political virtues, and the cruel Destroyers of mankind may be celebrated for the bravest Heroes of their age. But it behoves a *Christian* to judge of persons and things by another standard; unless it cou'd be prov'd, that *Christ's Kingdom* was wholly of *this World* -- or that Piety was a downright Solæcism in the system of a King's Politicks -- or that the maxims of a *Richelieu* or *Mazarine* were to be admitted in preference to the simplicity of the Gospel-precepts.

The children of this World, the Politicians of the Age, may be, in their generation, with regard to some point in present view, and the contrivance of proper means in order to their end, may indeed be wiser than the children of Light; yet, upon the whole, 'tis certain, that they are errant fools; inasmuch as they are mistaken in that wherein the principal praise of Wisdom consists, the most fundamental point, viz. the choice of the End itself.

They, who estimated things by the success, and cou'd applaud triumphant wickedness, might perhaps with insulting pity despise this unpolitick, unfortunate, good King: *They fools accounted his Life Madness and his End to be without honour; -- but how is he numbered among the children of God, and his Lot is among the Saints!* deservedly canoniz'd in the Calendar of our Church, for whose cause he endur'd the extremity of Persecution, and with his blood gave the last testimony to the Truth. To suffer for Conscience sake is the glory and happiness of a *Christian*: and in this point of view His character, as it stands more eminently distinguish'd by variety of sufferings, stands more peculiarly entitled to the several Beatitudes promis'd by our Saviour. But the Martyrdom of a King was a transaction unprecedented in all history, as much to the astonishment of all other nations, as to the shame of our own: The Cause was indeed glorious, and deriv'd no less credit upon that pure scheme of Religion, in profession of which he died, than an indelible mark of infamy on his inhuman Murderers: the quality of the Royal sufferer enhanc'd the merit of the suffering: His Life, His Death evidenc'd the efficacy of Christian principles: *He, being dead, yet speaketh*: And all succeeding Kings may ever be instructed, or upbraided by his example.

I have been led on by the present occasion to consider the *Fear of God*, and all Christian virtues springing from that root, as most signally exemplified in the character of the *Royal Martyr*. But the Precept of my Text is directed to the *Subject*, and is connected with his duty to the *King*: Accordingly I proceed to apply this principle to the regulation of *his* conduct, and shew that the impression of Religious principles or the fear of God is the only sure grounds and preservation of *Loyalty*.

'Tis vain to seek out the Rule of duty in the abstract fitnesses of things: No Governour will trust the reasonings of his people on principles, which in the course of things are like to be continually misunderstood and misapplied. And as for the Law of Fashion — and the sense of Honour, that shadow of something substantial, which never continueth in one stay --- these in their very notion imply so much fickleness and uncertainty, that they cannot without absurdity be admitted for a rule of Action or principle of Civil obedience.

The Authority of God is the only ground of all moral obligation. Of this all wise Lawgivers in every age seem to have been fully sensible; And accordingly, they have declar'd their judgment in the case by the nature of that pledge and security, which they require the Subject to give of his allegiance. An oath is impos'd as the surest Test, and strongest obligation to fidelity. For what greater proof of sincerity can be given, than this solemn Appeal to the all-knowing God of truth, *Who will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain?* The Governour has then the greatest assurance of the Subject's allegiance, when he perceives that it is the necessary effect of his obedience to God; that it proceeds not
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[II]

from any casual, ungenerous motive, from the hope of some temporal advantage, or the fear of *wrath*, but from a steady principle of *conscience*, the fear of God, *by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree justice*. Let no man pretend to lay any other foundation of morality or civil obedience than that which is already laid, and stands sure in the Will of God. The fidelity of the Subject can be ensured on no other footing; but has, and ever will be found as precarious and variable, as are the circumstances on which it is founded. But the fear of God is a principle of uniform, invariable influence; and the good *Christian* amidst the various changes and chances of the world, will be ever found the most truly Loyal Subject. *He is like a wise man, that digged deep, and laid the foundation on a Rock. The rains descended — the floods came — the winds blew — and beat upon that house, — and it fell not; for it was founded on a Rock.*

This description in a lively manner represents the character of an unshaken Loyalty in the most turbulent times; --- a character, by which this University above all other places stood most eminently distinguish'd. 'Twas their glory to persevere even unto the end in vindication of the Royal cause, and by their Sufferings to give the noblest proof of their Sincerity; choosing rather to endure affliction with their dethroned Sovereign, and the distressed *Church of England*, 'than by base compliances with Usurped Power to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a season, or hold their preferments at the expence of their honour and conscience. May these principles of true, disinterested Loyalty, standing upon Religion, their proper basis, for ever flourish together with the memory of those great Examples! and may those virtues, which stand on record to the glory of our Ancestors, never be mention'd to the reproach of a degenerating Posterity! Be it still the praise of these
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seats of Learning and Religion to be distinguish'd by the fair character of Loyalty; *studying to be quiet and to do their own business; Fearing God; Honouring and obeying the King, and all that are in authority under him; Leading peaceable lives in all Godliness and honesty, that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil to say of them!*

To fear God, and the King are indeed distinct precepts; but such is their mutual dependency and connexion, that they cannot well be treated of separately. The fear of God stands first, according to priority of order as well as nature: to this the fear of the King is subordinate. Being thus connected they are presum'd to be consistent: But if in any case they shou'd happen to interfere, the latter must of course give way to the former. We must then obey God rather than man; and rather incur the hazard of the fiery furnace of affliction, than *fall down and worship the golden image*, which, in defiance of the divine Laws, it may please an Arbitrary Prince to set up. We therefore first lay down Religion for the foundation, and on this we build our Loyalty.

Fear of the King is here, proportionably as in the other instance, us'd as a general term, implying all other duties resulting from the awfull sentiment of Majesty. What in particular these are, as to their nature and measure, we may collect from the Reason of things, from the Laws of God, and the Laws of Man. Accordingly, whatever conformity of moral behaviour is necessary to answer the ends of Government, and preserve the common good of Society, this, as being the Means in order to the general End, is of course included in the precept: And therefore since the very notion of authority in the Government implies the duty of submission in the Subject, the proper way of expressing our fear is to pay a ready

dy obedience to his commands. Every one in his station must patiently bear his own burden, and cheerfully discharge his office, that so the administrations of Justice may be regularly carried on, and the interests of the Community maintain'd. The end of Government is mutual Protection: Duties between Prince and Subject are relative and correspondent: the interests of both are bound up together. To the orderly exercise of authority we owe the quiet enjoyment of our Liberty and Property; and therefore the defence of the King's person and Legal prerogatives becomes a debt of Justice, as well as Gratitude from the Subject in return for benefits receiv'd. Our best Services are due to him on all occasions; and more especially in circumstances of danger, and distress; and we shall find in the end that the defence of the Government is no other than Self-preservation.

With regard to the King's *person* there is a singular reverence more immediately implied in the notion of Fear, — a sort of incommunicable honour and respect plac'd, as it were a guard, about his presence, forbidding too familiar an approach and indecent treatment. The Life of the Sovereign is in some sense the life and Soul of the Community, which is actuated and directed by his authority; and in this view is to be esteem'd *Sacred*, and to be distinguish'd by a more awfull regard. And accordingly, by the Laws of this Realm it is *treason to compass or imagine the death of the King.* 25 Ed. III. St. 5. c. 2.

It is generally found by experience, that the contempt of the Person officiating redounds often to the contempt of the *Office* itself: and thus in the event the ordinances of God are liable to be blasphem'd thro' the accidental defect of qualifications in the Ministry.

Ministry. It is therefore highly expedient that the divine institution of Government shou'd be plainly represented and inculcated; and more especially, vulgar, undistinguishing heads shou'd be possess'd with an uncommon veneration for Majesty, that publick administrations may be more successfully conducted without opposition, or interruption. 'Tis observ'd, that authority is founded in Reputation, and accordingly, to disparage the Reputation of a Prince is to weaken his Authority, and eventually to disappoint the good ends of Government. *Therefore thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy people.* On the account of the publick good a dutiful reverence is due to his Person and Office: It behoves us in our thoughts, words, and actions to shew ourselves charitable, respectful, obedient. All this is at least implied in the duty of *Fear*; not to mention that awe of constraint or servile deference to authority arising from the apprehension of Punishment.

But if we carry our views farther, and consider the Scripture-doctrine of submission to the higher Powers, we there find an additional obligation to the duty enjoin'd. In truth, the whole tenour of the Christian Scheme of morality seems purposely calculated for the benefit of Civil Government; for supporting the authority of the Magistrate, and securing the obedience of the Subject. And therefore, in return of such good offices, It appears justly entitled to the protection of the *Higher Powers*: Every wise Governour will think himself oblig'd, in point of interest as well as duty, to countenance the profession, and promote the influence of those principles, which are the truest rule, and support of his Authority, and the foundation of his Security.

It was the Misfortune of the *primitive Christians* to be traduc'd by their persecutors, as Traitors to the State,

State, and Enemies to the establish'd Government. And therefore we may observe, that the Apostles, among other instructions, more emphatically insist on this point, endeavouring, by the force of precept as well as example, to confute this injurious imputation. It may be sufficient to our present purpose to recite St Paul's reasoning on this subject in his Epistle to the Romans. *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers: —* Here is a direct, positive precept enjoining subjection without any limitation or ground of exemption in favour of any orders or degrees of men. *For there is no power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordained of God:* In these words the grounds and reasons of this subjection are express'd, as being founded in the will of God, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. 'Tis to be observ'd that Government in general, abstracted from any particular form, is here asserted to be not a contrivance merely human, but of a divine original, *the ordinance of God.* And from hence by a necessary consequence he proceeds to infer that, *Who so resisteth the Power, resisteth the ordinance of God:* Every opposition to the authority of human Laws, is here laid down as an instance of disobedience to the authority of God: And then follows the denunciation of just punishment in consequence of such guilt, *and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation —* punishment, both temporal and eternal, the necessary effect of their disobedience to Laws, both human and divine.

From hence a *Christian* Subject may collect a lesson of Politicks, sufficient for his ordinary direction. His duty is not only plainly laid down, but also (that which seldom accompanies the manner of delivering Scriptural precepts) the reasonableness of it is prov'd from the very fitnesses of things; and from thence the obligation is inferr'd, as well as further enforc'd by

by a divine authority. And it certainly behoves a Christian to consider, that in every instance of obedience his duty to the King is bound up together with his duty to God; As he feareth God, so also, in just proportion, and by virtue of the divine Will he must fear the King: That he must be subject not only for *wrath*, but also for *conscience sake*; and shew that his allegiance, both active and passive, flows from an higher principle, than that of a meer Moral man or Heathen politician.

We may here remark, that the whole is expressed in general terms, without any particular application or restriction. *What* the higher Powers are, is a point not here determin'd, but presuppos'd, as already known. *Cesar's image and superscription* on the Coin of the country is a sufficient presumptive proof of his Sovereignty. And where this was once acknowledg'd, there of course obligation to obedience immediately follow'd. *Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.* -- And further, with regard to civil obedience, we may remark, that only the general duty is commanded, but the particular measures of it are not here any way limited or determined. St. Paul's argument is abstractive from any such consideration; and therefore seems to be misapplied in political controversies, both by those, who wou'd from hence in all cases infer an obligation to an absolute passive obedience; and those on the other hand, who in the tenour of the precept wou'd find out reasons to justify resistance to the higher Powers. 'Tis certain in general, that the measures of Obedience in the Subject bear proportion to the measures of Authority in the Prince: Where the Prince has a right to command there the Subject is oblig'd to obey. But in *what* cases and *how far* that right extends -- is a point which must be determin'd by some other Rule. And here the Laws and Constitutions of every particular

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Government must be taken into consideration; These must be applied to adjust the boundaries between Authority and Liberty, between the Prerogative of the Prince, and the Rights of the Subject. Happy is that Constitution, where these limitations are inviolably observ'd! Power, stretch'd beyond its Legal extent is really weakned: and Liberty without restraint is a kind of popular madness; Encroachments on either side are attended with dangerous consequences; the breach is widen'd by reprisals, and becomes irreparable; the balance of powers being destroy'd, confusion and disorders must ensue; and the Government is finally ruin'd in the contention. — Such was the case in those unhappy times of *Charles the First*! when, the extent of the Royal Prerogative being not well ascertain'd, amidst the various necessities of State, dangerous experiments were made by the exercise of irregular power, which provok'd an implacable opposition, and at length ended in the destruction both of Monarchy and Liberty.

With regard to the present age I cannot but remark among other advantages attending the *happy Revolution*, this one in particular, that the very occasions of disputes on this head between Prince and Subject are now wisely prevented; the Laws having limited the exercise of the Royal Prerogative. At the same time while we look back to the generations which are past, and consider the different constitution of things; while we consider the indeterminate extent of the Prerogative, and the frequent interpositions of arbitrary power without interruption or contradiction of the Subject; we shall find reason to moderate our censures with regard to Persons and Administrations, and be inclin'd to make some favourable allowances, not only for common personal failings, but also for irregular illtimed measures; and not to pass a rigorous judgment upon such proceedings

ings by a Rule, which then perhaps was not in being, (inasmuch as many acts might not *then* be esteem'd unwarrantable, which *afterwards* by some subsequent provision became illegal:) At least we shall be inclin'd to treat with charity and candour the character of a most virtuous Prince, and impute the irregularities committed to necessity, rather than choice; to the wrong advice of Counsellors, rather than to the wantonness of a tyrannical disposition; to inexperience, and error of judgment, rather than contempt of the Laws, or any wickedness of intention.

'Tis not my business nor inclination to enter into Controverted political matters; nor to harangue upon the limitations of the Royal power, and the extent of the Subjects liberty. I rather beg leave on this occasion, and on this day, for ever sacred to the cause of Monarchy, while I am recommending the duty of fearing the King, to represent the high Idea of the Superiority and inviolable dignity of an *English* Monarch in this authentick Declaration of the Legislature. 12 Car. II. c. 30. "*That, by the undoubted and Fundamental Laws of this Kingdom, neither the Peers of this Realm, nor the Commons, nor both together in Parliament or out of Parliament, nor the people collectively or representatively, nor any other persons whatsoever ever had, have, hath, or ought to have any Coercive power over the Persons of the Kings of this Realm.*"

We may here remark that this solemn declaration was not an assertion of any new political doctrine but a recognition of the ancient *fundamental* constitution. And the Maxim in Law, that *the King can do no wrong* seems founded on this very supposition, that there is no where lodged a superior coercive power over his Person. And I choose to represent Majesty in this point of view, as it is more especially seasonable in this licentious age; wherein many affect popularit

by debasing the Regal character, and, glorying in, I know not what, Scheme of false Patriotism, wantonly *despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities*, and in a manner degrade Sacred Majesty to the level of the People. With regard to Such persons, (and especially if they call themselves friends to the present Government) they will, I hope, be taught by the voice of publick Wisdom to entertain reverential sentiments of Majesty, and, at least out of a principle of obedience to the Legislature, to fear and honour the King, whose Person the Laws have rendred thus Sacred and inviolable. As members of the Community we owe homage and the tribute of our best services to the Head, from which life and vigour is diffus'd thro' the whole Body; and our gratitude, reverence and esteem shou'd accompany the communications of superior power and goodness. To think uncharitably, to speak irreverently, to act in opposition or contempt of Majesty is a preposterous abuse of Liberty, and a most ungracious return for the indulgence so liberally given under a free Government; And, I am sure, is utterly inconsistent with the duty enjoin'd in my text; since the very notion of Fear implies at least an awfull respect and sense of decency, and imposes a restraint upon every bold and irregular motion. I shall only add, that in every instance of civil obedience we shou'd remember, that we are Christian Subjects, and, as such, we find ourselves under an additional obligation to *Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's Sake*; not with a servile fear, but with an ingenuous reverence, as *free indeed, but not using our Liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as Servants of God*.

I proceed now, in the next place, to consider the prohibition or caution, given in the latter clause of my text, against the spirit of innovation in establish'd Governments, against every tendency towards Sedition. *Meddle not with them that are given to change.* We

We must remark, that this is not to be laid down absolutely without any restriction: It cannot be suppos'd to extend to all manner of changes whatever, to changes made by a competent authority; for doubtless the same Legislative power, which at first constituted any form of Government, may for good reasons occasionally interpose, and make proper alterations. But the changes, against which we are here caution'd, are such, as are projected and attempted by private persons in opposition to publick authority.

The caution is founded on weighty reasons, sufficient to dissuade every wise and good man from entering into such schemes; as far as the consideration of the folly, wickedness, or mischief of any proceedings has any influence. The very notion of being *given to change* carries with it the imputation of Levity and Arrogance. In cases of this kind, the presumption will of course stand in favour of the Establishment. What has been thus fix'd by the deliberate conclusions of wisdom, and continually confirm'd by publick approbation, has withal taken too deep root in the judgments and affections of all sober men to be wantonly and hastily remov'd, for no better reason than to gratify the capricious humours of a few busy enterprizing projectors. 'Tis esteem'd a sign of a weak head to act at random, without a determinate view to a certain End: But this often is the case of these popular politicians: they act indeed uniformly and consistently enough in one point, in a determin'd opposition to that Government, by which their enormities shou'd be restrain'd, and never rest, till they have by their impetuosity born down all that stands in their way; but after all these violent measures they are at a loss with regard to the main point in pursuit: They at once drop the blef-

fed work of Reformation, of which they had been long dreaming; they content themselves with acting offensively against the Constitution; they with hasty zeal pull down, without any design or skill to build up, and cannot agree in substituting any new scheme in the room of that, which they demolish: *Destruction and unhappiness are in their ways*; till at length, after continual disappointments in the several changes made, they too late feel the conviction of their folly in the calamities, which they have brought upon themselves, and begin to wish for the reestablishment of that very form of Government, which they before thought intolerable. Or, if some ambitious Projectors shou'd attempt to raise a new superstructure upon the ruins of the old foundations, they seldom succeed in the execution of such inauspicious designs: they are often infatuated in their wisdom, divided by misunderstandings, and disconcerted in their measures, and defeated in their undertakings by the very instruments of their Power. They, who in their imagination would have made themselves *a name and built a city and tower, whose top might reach unto heaven*, by the wonderful interposition of God's Providence are *confounded in their language, so that they understand not one another's speech, they leave off to build the city, and are scattered abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth.*

The folly and mischief of these innovating schemes was never more plainly exemplified than in the history of those times, which the present occasion suggests to our thoughts. We see an obstinate, deluded people working out their own ruin in all the variety of confusions: impatient of all restraint, impatient even of their happiness, they join'd in loud seditious clamours against the administrations of Government in Church and State; as tho' every innovation must be for the better. Redress of grievances and reformation

mation of Religion were the pretended specious cause of their opposition: and they fondly thought, that this work of the Lord prosper'd in their hands: and they cou'd never be satisfied, till, after the experience of various changes continually for the worst, their cruel successes at last brought them under the yoke of the most unsupportable tyranny, and the necessity of submitting to real grievances, which were never to be redress'd. They look'd for the benefits of Liberty, but behold! Oppression: they found themselves punish'd in the total loss of that blessing, which they had wantonly abus'd. They affected a greater purity of Religion, but, instead of this, nothing was found but the grossest Hypocrisy: and the very Being of a Church was destroy'd by the preposterous means of promoting its Well-being, like the remedy of a disease, which kills the patient in the operation. — They join'd in the popular cry against *Popery*, and at the same time acted upon Popish principles; for No Church, but that of *Rome*, pretends to authorize the rebellion of Subjects against their Prince: and tis the distinguishing character of this our best reform'd Church, that it enjoins the strictest Loyalty in the full extent of the Christian precept. — They exclaim'd against *Episcopacy*, as a Popish, Antichristian institution; In this respect also they involuntarily acted upon Popish principles; for these are the foundation of the Presbyterian Scheme in opposition to *Episcopacy*: The Church of *Rome* not only refuses to acknowledge the divine right of *Episcopacy*, and the equality of Christian Bishops, as *such*, (which in consequence wou'd be inconsistent with the notion of the Pope's Supremacy,) but also in its Catechism, publish'd by publick authority, where the several Orders of the Church are enumerated, mentions *Episcopacy*, not as a distinct Order, but as included in the Presbyterate. Now after all, what a strange insatiation was this in Protestant Subjects to rebel against

gainst the best Protestant Sovereign, and out of an irreconcilable aversion to Popery, to promote its interests, by opposing and impugning the Church of *England*, and therein subverting the purest Apostolical Constitution, the principal support and glory of the Reformation?

Effects so fatal attended the Scheme of innovations in Government, exceeding all that ever the boldest projectors at first design'd, or the higher Powers had reason to fear! We may consider them as *recorded for our admonition*, that we *should not lust after* changes of the establishment, *as they lusted*, and were punish'd in their own devices; nor *murmur against* our Governours, *as they murmured*, and in the end were *destroy'd of the Destroyer*. We may perceive a violent transition from one extreme to another, equally inconsistent with the common happiness; Liberty unrestrain'd soon passed into Anarchy, and Anarchy was succeeded by a confirm'd Tyranny. These examples may teach us the danger of being *given to change*. A wise man will rather quietly submit to the inconveniences of a settled Government, than seek redress by a seditious, tumultuary opposition: evils of a determinate extent may be born with patience, till they can be remedied with safety. And besides these prudential reasons, the principles of our Religion oblige us, as Christian Subjects, and especially in personal grievances, to pay a dutifull and passive submission to the higher powers, *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake*. And it behoves us more especially to keep these considerations in view, to counterbalance the workings of that specious favorite principle, the zeal for Liberty; which is apt to betray us unawares into excesses, of which we shall too late repent. Nothing is more fallacious; impatience of legal restraints is often taken for the effect of publick spirit, and Patriotism; and our private passions and interests are serv'd

serv'd under the plausible notion of common Good. We shou'd therefore be watchfull over ourselves, that in such cases we *use not our Liberty for a cloak of maliciousness*, as a plea to justify our opposition to lawfull authority.

And we may further observe, as a dissuasive against being *given to change*, that the motives of such proceedings are generally not less unwarrantable, than the effects are mischievous. Ambition, Avarice, Envy, Revenge, &c. are commonly the springs of action: these are importunate, boisterous passions, which disorder and deprave the mind, and push it on into violences repugnant to principles of common Justice, and the publick Peace. And indeed we may well expect to find bad practices correspondent to such bad motives: Sedition is a complicated crime; and the men *given to change* seldom trouble themselves with scruples about the lawfullness of the means, which appear necessary to their ends. They are busy intriguers, skill'd in all the little arts of popularity, and continually lying in wait to deceive — and from hence we are taught to apprehend the danger of *meddling* with them. 'Tis a general observation that there is a strange contagion in bad examples: *Evil communications* imperceptibly corrupt good manners; and this very corruption renders men insensible of their danger. And this more especially holds in the present case: the company of seditious men is very ensnaring: people join in nothing so readily as finding faults, and making objections, and are more easily drawn into a scheme, where something will be found, which will gratify the humour of every party. The factious Politician never wants plausible matter; he recommends his designs by the most artfull address to men's several passions, and knows how to improve their inconstancy or discontent into a desire of effecting some change in the

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State. A gracious condescension and civility to every Israelite, a specious zeal for the publick good, with an insinuation of the wrong measures of the Government which must be reform'd, and, *Oh, that I were made Judge in the land, that every man, which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice.* These were the successfull Arts of seditious popularity: so *Abshalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.* — 'Tis the general infirmity of human nature to be given to change: We are naturally fond of novelty: New schemes please the fancy, and are generally receiv'd with applause: and, without considering the consequences, we are eager to hazard the experiment. But in no instance is this capricious humour more shewn, than in the case of Government. Government is a mixt subject, of an intricate complicated nature; and every form of it will be liable to some exceptions, as long as human Lawgivers are not exempt from the common imperfections of their nature; or as long as envious, discontented men shall be found in every community, who will have inclination to object and cavil against ordinances, which they have not skill to reform. Certain it is, that in the present state of things nothing absolutely perfect is to be expected: and so, changes may be multiplied to infinity, and still to no purpose; never sufficient to answer such unreasonable expectations. Few are able to comprehend all the reasons of Government; yet almost every one thinks himself a competent Judge in this point, as it is easy to discover some defect or feel a grievance. And accordingly, no subject is consider'd in a more partial view, or more abus'd by misrepresentations. I beg leave to apply the observation of the most judicious Mr *Hooker* on this topick. "He that goeth about to persuade a Multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers: because they know the manifold

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"defects, whereunto every regimen is subject; but
 "the secret lets and difficulties, which in publick
 "proceedings are innumerable, and inevitable, they
 "have not ordinarily the judgment to consider. And,
 "because such as openly reprove the suppos'd disor-
 "ders of state, are taken for principal friends to the
 "common benefit of all, and for men, that carry a
 "singular freedom of mind, under this fair and plau-
 "sible colour, whatsoever they utter, passes for good
 "and current; that which is wanting in the weight
 "of their speech, being supplied by the aptness of
 "men's minds to accept and believe it."

So that men *given to change* set out with advantage
 in disputes of this kind, whilst they bear the part
 only of opponents, taking the plausible side of the
 question; and are like to gain their point by flat-
 tering the popular prejudices. There is something
 in the very idea of an Establishment, which gives
 offence: it implies some restraint upon Liberty, and
 therefore cannot but provoke opposition: And there
 is something in the very notion of appearing wiser
 than publick wisdom, and the bravery of overbearing
 publick authority, which gives an air of uncommon
 importance, and withall swells the vanity, and en-
 courages the boldness of these enterprizing spirits.
 Grounds of complaint and discontent will never be
 wanting; nor will the efforts of ill will or wit be
 wanting to set forth their aggravations: in short, the
 Church and State must first be vilified and misrep-
 resented, in order to be reform'd: The pretence of
 some publick Good is applied to recommend every
 attempt of innovation: The spirit of Patriotism and
 zeal for Liberty are successfull engines of popularity.
 Discontented people of every denomination are ready
 to enter into the specious scheme; and even many,
 who are friends to the Constitution, will not scruple
 to join in opposing the wrong measures of the

the administration, and maintaining the rights and privileges of the Subject against the encroachments of the Crown. But, when once these private Statesmen and Leaders of the Faction have united the several jarring interests of a mixt multitude in one common point of opposition to the measures of Government, and, when successes have given countenance and credit to their undertakings, then a variety of new projects is started, and the scheme of changes is gradually enlarged, in proportion to the additional encrease of their Power: Then it happens, that even the more moderate men, being involv'd in the common scheme, are hurried on by the sons of violence into excesses, which they never approv'd, and unwittingly become the instruments of irreparable mischiefs, which they never intended.

All this we find sadly exemplified in the History of the late Civil wars. Then indeed *Rebellion* appear'd like the *sin of Witchcraft*: a strange infatuation attended every step in the progress. How inconsiderable were the causes; unobserv'd and disregarded in their Operations? the effects how unexpected and unaccountable? and the final issue of things how full of horror and astonishment? Such were the counsels of men given to change, so fatal their consequences! — *O my Soul, come not thou into their secret, and to their assembly, O mine Honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their Self-will they digged down a Wall; Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel! I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel, —* The example, to which these words are applicable, an example of the most execrable treason, which was ever committed by Subjects against their Sovereign, attended by the most grievous punishment, the most lamentable calamities, which cou'd befall a Nation, will, I hope, for ever, together with the detestation of the wickedness, and
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dread of the horrible consequences, inculcate this prudential lesson of necessary caution against all communications of interests, or alliances of friendship with Factious men, whose principles we sincerely disclaim and abhor. *What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?* No good effect can be expected from such unnatural alliances. A virtuous man will suffer in his moral character from the scandal of keeping bad company; He as a party becomes involv'd in the imputation of wicked practices, in which he did not immediately concur. *He that toucheth pitch will be defiled therewith.* Personal affections mix themselves in all our judgments and actions: 'Tis not easy to attend to nice distinctions in a mixed case: Prejudice in behalf of the Friend is a Plea in excuse of the Traitor's guilt; and 'tis not an uncommon transition from a favourable regard of the Person to the approbation of the Cause. Let us therefore beware how we at all meddle with men given to change; how we enter into their secret, or unite our selves to their assemblies: Let the apprehension of danger teach us to keep our selves at a distance, and depart from the tents of those wicked men; least we partake in their sins, and be consumed in their punishment,

And indeed there is more than ordinary occasion to press this caution, inasmuch as wise and good men are apt in such cases to confide too much in their prudence and integrity, and thro' security are unawares betray'd into danger, which they did not apprehend or regard. Not to be given to change in the strict, absolute sense is the prerogative of the supreme, all perfect Being: *With him there is no variableness, or shadow of turning.* But mutability is inseparable from the imperfections of human nature and by continually indulging our selves herein, we improve this weakness into a sort of pleasure and delight in variety and novelties, which the most agreeable ob-

jects cease to produce when they become familiar. *To say hitherto shalt thou come and no further* is the incommunicable privilege of that omnipotent power, which *stilleth the raging of the sea, and the madness of the people.* But for weak man to pretend to guide or controul the unruliness of a seditious multitude, or to oppose and stop the progress of an inundation, to which he contributed by first opening a breach, is a presumption as vain and extravagant, as his folly is inexcusable, who instead of preserving the ancient mounds (a work not less easy than necessary) gave way to the unlimited mischief by encouraging the dangerous experiment. *The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore let go contention e'er it be meddled with.* By this similitude the wise man aptly represents the little causes, which being at first unheeded give birth to evils, which by degrees spread beyond all bounds without controul or remedy; and accordingly, suggests the timely interposition of our care to take away the very occasion of those mischiefs, which we shall afterwards too late and in vain lament, not without this sad reflexion, that they were occasion'd by our neglect. Here then is the point, in which our prudence shou'd be exercis'd; to hinder the first letting out of water; to keep the stream in its proper channel, or repair a small breach: Precaution is better than the remedy, which in this case either becomes unnecessary, or is applied too late: nor is it any difficult matter at first to prevent the overflowings of ungodliness, which soon become irresistible in their progress, and spread abroad the terrors of an universal desolation,

It were to be wish'd that wise and good men wou'd consider both in a moral and political view the dangerous consequences of entring into the measures of a Faction or Party-scheme; and they cou'd not but discern very strong reasons dissuading them from

from every such adventure. *Behold, how a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump!* how the whole course of our behaviour is chang'd by the influence of such principles. 'Tis observable that the very moral taste is deprav'd by Party-regards: the true notions and order of things are confounded and perverted: *men put darknes for light and evil for good: they love darknes rather than light, because their deeds are evil:* A false standard of judgment is set up: the particular interests of the Party is made the supreme concern; and is very preposterously set up for the measure of publick good, and into this every consideration is resolv'd; right and wrong, all characters of persons and things stand or fall upon this test. Praise and reproach, the reward of virtue, and discouragement of vice are distributed with a singular partiality: sound principles, honour, and probity, and whatsoever is commendable and of good report, peculiarly belongs to their friends and confederates; uncharitable resentments and turbulent passions pass for the effects of a laudable zeal, and unwarrantable practices are sanctified by the plea of a good intention: and with regard to personal merit, we upon the whole may conclude thus much, that they, who so liberally give and receive praise, are of the same Party. But with respect to those of a different denomination, they are sure to be loaded with the unpopular imputations of every fault, which may do discredit to their cause. Thus in the times of our national confusion the best principled members of our Church were represented as friends to Popery, and the most valuable part of the nation was contain'd in the list of *Delinquents* and *Malignants*. In short, the principles of common justice and Christian charity, of justice, *which rendereth to all their dues*, of charity, *which speaketh no evil, and thinketh no evil*, seem to be, as it were by tacit consent, suspended and laid aside in the measures of conducting Party-schemes. And thus

in the end publick virtue and the morality of a people will be corrupted and destroy'd by the leaven of Party-zeal. 'Tis with some wonder and concern we perceive men, who in their private character have had the reputation of good sense and integrity, forfeit their title to both, when they of a sudden enter into the violent measures of any Faction: One wou'd think that Party-Guides were invested with a sort of infallibility; such an implicit submission follows their directions. A wise man here seems to be at once infatuated and becomes the Dupe of Knaves: he prostitutes his judgment to the discretion of those, who are likely to mislead him; he suffers himself to be govern'd by prejudices, *and given up to a strong delusion, to believe the prevailing lye of his party*: His political faith follows his affection, and his affection is influenc'd by the interest of his party. And when once a man is unable to preserve his independency, and the free management of his own actions, his integrity is then in great danger. Being now engaged in a common cause and involv'd in the effects of other men's actions, he is no longer master of his own; he cannot answer for his own purposes; but being once embark'd, he is carried down the stream with his company; he is overborn by the violence of his party, and forc'd to join in measures, against which he wou'd in vain offer remonstrances: But now it is too late to make a stand; he has advanc'd too far; and cannot now retreat with safety or honour; and therefore in the end he is oblig'd to proceed to extremities, which his first intentions never wou'd have admitted.

Such is the *deceitfulness of sin*; so fatal is the contagion, when we once *meddle with men given to change*! Let the apprehension of the sad consequences, which they observe in the history of their forefathers, admonish all honest, well-meaning men to be on their guard

guard, not to suffer themselves to be drawn off from the plain line of duty by any specious pretences; not to disregard the danger thro' confidence in their own integrity, nor invite the temptation, which they will not find themselves able to withstand. *The heart is deceitfull above all things; who can know it?* and more especially in the present case, where men are mixed in bad company, under the contagious influence of evil counsels and examples.

When *Elisha*, in the spirit of Prophecy, represented to *Hazael* the scene of most brutish hostilities and cruelties, which he one day shou'd exercise on the people of *Israel*, cruelties so shocking that the distant apprehension of them extorted tears from the Prophet's eyes, the astonish'd *Syrian* with an ingenuous resentment, and noble indignation, express'd his abhorrence of such barbarities; barbarities which in his present circumstances he thought improbable and impossible, not less beyond his power than contrary to his inclination. What, *is thy servant a Dog, that he shou'd do this great thing?* — And yet in fact he prov'd that very *Dog*: -- change of sentiment and intentions follow'd the change of his fortune. As King of *Syria*, he must gratify his ambition and revenge on a rival nation: and power and opportunity serving his designs, he did terribly exemplify that very character of an inhuman Conquerour, which he had before so generously and sincerely detested.

In like manner, in the *beginnings of strife* if any one shou'd, in the spirit of Prophecy, have foretold the sad consequences of the *grand Rebellion*, with all the strange aggravations of horror, our Forefathers wou'd, with like incredulity and detestation, have disclaim'd the surprizing imputation of villanies, so much beyond the power of their own wicked hearts to intend or conceive. — Nevertheless the truth of such incre-
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dible prediction wou'd have been too surely confirm'd by the lamentable event. Some indeed, from the beginning, appear to have form'd evil designs against the Government both in Church and State; and to have set out in the opposition with the unwarrantable ambitious views of *Absalom*. And others followed, like *the two hundred men that went with Absalom out of Jerusalem, that were called; they went in their simplicity and knew not any thing*. Yet these honest well-meaning people, being once engag'd in the measures of a wicked faction, soon lost their innocence and the shame of guilt; they were insensibly carried on to greater lengths than they at first intended: They had acted offensively beyond the hopes of pardon or reconciliation; and, (as it is generally found a difficult matter to forgive the man, whom we have causlessly injur'd) fresh provocations are sought for further injuries: one treasonable act must now be justified by another, 'till, by a fatal progression thro' the several stages, they at last fill up the measure of their iniquity, obdurate and confirm'd in their villainous purposes, thro' necessity or despair.

Let the sad experience of former times, rather than our own, teach us a lesson of wisdom; let not either our credulity with regard to other men's pretensions, or a firm confidence in the sincerity of our own good purposes betray us into any alliance of friendship or policies with *men given to change*: as we wou'd preserve our innocence, let us be carefull to avoid the danger, *and pray that we be not led into temptation*: According to the advice given by the wise man on the like occasion, *make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare unto thy soul*.

The words immediately following my Text set forth a strong motive enforcing the observance of

the precept, *Meddle not with them, that are given to change, for their calamity shall rise suddenly.* — And surely, if ever in any case this assertion was terribly verified, it was so in the example of the unhappy, victorious Rebels. Behold the triumphs of the *men given to change!* — they had succeeded in this respect beyond their most ambitious hope: they had subverted the best constituted Government: And what at length did they learn from the experiment of frequent changes, but that they had only changed the shape of their misery, and lost their substantial happiness, without prospect of recovery? They were indeed brought down amidst the prosperity of their wickedness and *punish'd by their own inventions: promising liberty, they (in the strongest sense of the words) became servants to corruption:* The continual exchange of Masters made no alteration in their condition for the better, but rather tended to aggravate their calamity, and added a fresh disgrace to the pressure of their slavery. The confusions and miseries of the times were beyond the example of former ages; *The foundations were destroy'd, and what shou'd the righteous do? Fire came out of the bramble, and devour'd the cedars of Libanus; — And the Lord sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Sichem;* and now, to what desolation was a kingdom brought thus divided against itself? It quickly appeared, (as the *noble Historian* observ'd on this occasion) how insecure new institutions of Government are, and when the contrivers of them have provided, as they think, against all mischievous contingencies, they find they have unwarily left a gap open, to let in their destruction upon them. *Clar. Hist. B. 5.* In truth, the histories of those times are so many continued recitals of national calamities, and mark out the footsteps of God's providence in the varied punishments of a sinfull people. And we find upon the whole, multiplicity of examples upon record concurring to prove the truth of the good

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King's observation, that the "Religion of Subjects
 "to their God, and Loyalty to their King cannot be
 "parted without their sin and infelicity." ΕΙΣ. ΒΑΣΙΛ.

In the last place, with a view to the present occasion, the doctrine of my Text is to be consider'd as the principal Moral Lesson contain'd in the reason of the publick appointment. This Anniversary Fast, as together with the memory of those unhappy times, it suggests to our thoughts the causes of publick evils, at the same time inculcates afresh the necessity of those principles, whose operation wou'd have prevented the calamities, which we now lament; and withall gives us a severe admonition *not to meddle with men given to Change*, while we perceive the fatal effects of their designs; which, from small beginnings, from insidious plausible pretences gaining popularity and strength in their progress, thro' a long gradation of successfull wickedness, at last ended in the most execrable treason; the subversion of the best constituted Government, and the murder of the best of Kings. — *A wonderfull and horrible thing was committed in the land; at which the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. The voice of the Royal Martyr's blood crieth unto heaven from the ground.* — Murder in general is an act of violence most inhuman, and properly diabolical: the defacing the image of God in man is a sort of more direct treason against the divine Majesty, and, as such, more immediately provokes the divine vengeance. — But Regicide, deliberate, formal Regicide, perpetrated by Protestant Subjects, bound by their own *League and Covenant*, as well as common obligations to defend their Sovereign, and with the mock solemnity of publick justice, and all for the service of God is a sin of murder most execrable, *seedling sinfull*, and comes attended with circumstances, which add an uncommon horror to the ordinary aggravations of the crime.

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How far Posterity is involv'd in the effect of their forefathers sins, we cannot presume to determine; this must remain among the secret things of God to whom vengeance belongeth. But to say there is no such thing as national guilt and punishment; to adjust the divine proceedings by the measures of our own hypotheses, and to confine his temporal judgments merely to the persons of the immediate offenders, is a proceeding, too much like that of those Court-Prophets censur'd by Isaiah who lov'd to *smooth things and prophesy deceits*, and flatter the fond wishes of the present generation; and is a presumption, not warranted by God's word, nor consistent with the character of a *jealous God, who visiteth the sins of the fathers on the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.*

Let us on this occasion consider what special provision God himself directed (Deut. 21.) in the case of murder, in case even of *accidental* murder and indeterminate guilt. *If a man be found slain in the field, the Elders of the City nearest to the place,* (and therefore presum'd to be more nearly concern'd in the imputation) *shall wash their hands over the head of the Heifer,* (which was to be beheaded in the vally) *and shall say, our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it: be mercifull, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood to thy people of Israel's charge.* From hence we may learn the deep stain of blood-guiltiness, since even in a case where personal innocency can be pleaded, a peculiar formality of expiation by sacrifice and prayer was prescrib'd by God to purge away the pollution. — Let us likewise, who disclaim the imputation of personal guilt, join in the application of the like atonement to our present circumstances; and may this Anniversary sacrifice of a broken spirit of confession and prayer be accepted by God! *So shall he be entreat*

ed for the Land; so shall the guilt of innocent blood be put away from us, when we shall do what is right in the sight of the Lord. Let us, as we stand oblig'd both in point of piety and prudence, under our present circumstances, humble our selves under the mighty hand of God; and, as well as we can, disculpate ourselves from the guilt by publicly disclaiming those wicked principles and practices, and professing our detestation of the treason, and by proper expressions of sincere repentance deprecate the inflictions of his just judgments.

That this sad, solemn day, instituted for good purposes, both Civil and Religious, shou'd be by any set of men perverted into a *Fast of strife and debate* is indeed a sort of publick reproach, and is surely inconsistent with the duty of a national humiliation and repentance. Great indeed is the blame of those, who are guilty of such abuse; both of those, who, acting contrary to that pattern of generosity and meekness, which they do so much admire in the character of the Royal Martyr, on this occasion deal out offensive invectives, and railing accusations against their brethren; and more especially of Those, who either by a morose opposition discountenance, or with indecent insult of brutish mockery ridicule the observance of this solemnity. They, who do so, shew themselves to be as bad Subjects, as they are Christians: they dishonour and oppose the authority of the Civil Magistrate, by such an insolent contempt of his ordinance: and whatever their pretences may be, they surely shew themselves no friends to Monarchy and the present Government, who can treat Majesty with such irreverence and despite. Accidental abuses carry with them an argument not for dissolving or abolishing any institution, but for regulating and reforming. And with regard to this present Anniversary, the wisdom of the Legislature in making

making the appointment speaks itself, and is fully justified by solid reasons drawn both from considerations of good Policy and Religion; reasons, which I trust will ever have their weight, as long as the *Church of England* and *Monarchy* shall subsist, as long as there is found any moral instruction and use in example, as long as virtue shall be entitled to the reward of Praise, and Infamy shall be made the portion of wickedness.

The fear of reviving old disputes and perpetuating animosities has been alledg'd as a reason for discontinuing the observance of this day; — an idle, groundless fear! and fruitless Caution! unless at the same time the memory of past transactions and all historical records cou'd be destroy'd. -- But surely, if the matter was rightly understood, this is the most effectual means of promoting and perpetuating agreement and concord among all true friends to our Establishment in Church and State. For when we join in this Religious act, we jointly bear our testimony against those treasonable principles and practices, which every good Subject must abhor: we testify and avow our obligation to Loyalty; and, however we may happen to differ about the application of the proper means, (well-meaning people set at variance by the wicked cunning of Knaves!) yet, as we aim at one and the same end we are essentially friends, and herein profess ourselves united in one common interest. Let me therefore in the last place exhort you as friends to your Country, and as members to the best reform'd Church, to answer the good purposes intended in the institution of this anniversary solemnity; and, since some men are readily convinc'd by the doctrine of an *Act of Parliament*, who are not so easily influenc'd by other rational arguments, I shall recite the words of publick wisdom on this occasion: and let us all heartily join with
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the Legislature in making this honest solemn declaration: "that we do renounce, abominate, and protest against that impious Fact, committed by a party of wretched men, desperately wicked, and hardened in their impiety; the execrable Murther and most unparallel'd Treason against the Sacred person and life of King Charles the first, and all proceedings tending thereunto: an horrid Action, by which the Protestant Religion hath received the greatest wound and reproach, and the people of England the most unsupportable shame and infamy, that it was possible for the enemies of God and the King to bring upon us; while the Fanatick rage of a few Miscreants (who were as far from being true Protestants as they were from being true subjects,) stands imputed by our adversaries to the whole Nation. — And for the better vindication of our selves to Posterity, and as a lasting monument of our otherwise inexpressible detestation and abhorrency of this villanous and abominable Fact -- we keep and observe this Anniversary day of Fasting and Humiliation, to implore the Mercy of God that neither the guilt of that Sacred, and Innocent blood, nor those other sins, by which God was provoked to deliver up both us and our King into the hands of cruel and unreasonable men, may at any time hereafter be visited upon us or our Posterity." 12. Car. II. 30.

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